

TASTE

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MONDAY, MARCH 27, 1995

TASTE BUDS



CHEF LARRY JANES

Homemade vinaigrette among reader requests

Spring has finally sprung. I'm repainting the kitchen and getting my garden in order.

In between spring chores, I set aside time to listen to the messages you leave on my voice mail. Even though I might not return your call on the day you left a message, rest assured that I do my best to answer all of your requests as soon as possible.

Should you require a recipe, a written request with a self-addressed stamped envelope would be greatly appreciated.

Linda Brandt of Redford called with a problem. Her sugar turns into a hard block.

Well Linda, sugar will stay fresh and keep from "blocking" if you keep it in an airtight container. I keep mine in Tupperware and have never had a problem with hardening.

In her book "The Food Lover's Tiptony" (Hearst Books, 1994) Sharon Tyler Herbst recommends the following to soften sugar.

Place it in an airtight container with a wedge of apple or two for 1-3 days to soften. If that doesn't work, place the block of sugar on a large pie plate in a 250 degree F. oven for 5 minutes. The sugar should break into bits which then can be chopped back into granules in a food processor or blender.

Don Sanders called and wanted to know the recommended ratio of vinegar to oil when making a classic vinaigrette. Both "The Joy of Cooking" and "The New York Times Cookbook" state that the best ratio is 3 parts oil to one part vinegar.

The secret, of course, is whisking in the oil in small amounts to create a basic emulsion which helps keep the vinaigrette from separating. Here's a great recipe.

BASIC VINAIGRETTE

- 2 tablespoons vinegar, preferably balsamic vinegar
- 2 teaspoons Dijon-style mustard
- 6 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt and fresh ground pepper to taste
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic

Place the vinegar and the mustard in a bowl and stir with a wire whisk. Gradually add the oil, stirring rapidly with the whisk. Stir in salt, pepper and garlic. Makes 2 cups

Recipe from: "The New York Times Cookbook" by Craig Claiborne (Harper & Row, 1990).

Deanna Giffney of Livonia called and said that last summer she had an abundance of tomatoes and purchased a dehydrator to save them. Now she has an over-abundance of dehydrated tomatoes and wanted some suggestions on ways to use them.

Well Deanna, anytime a recipe calls for tomato sauce, stir in a handful of your dehydrated tomatoes for a richer, heartier taste. For optimum results, stir the dehydrated tomatoes into the sauce at least an hour before cooking. Try them when making spaghetti sauce, lasagna, tacos, sloppy joes and meatloaf. Here's a recipe for a great sauce you might enjoy.

SALSA DI POMODORO INVERNALE

(CLASSIC WINTER TOMATO SAUCE)

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 medium onion, minced
- 1 small carrot, minced
- 1 small stalk celery, minced
- 3 tablespoons minced Italian parsley
- 1 large clove garlic, minced
- 3 tablespoons fresh chopped basil
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 2 cups dehydrated tomatoes
- 2 cups tomato sauce
- Pinch sugar
- Salt and fresh ground black pepper to taste

Heat the oil in a heavy saucepan. Drop in the minced vegetables and parsley. Slowly saute, stirring often for 10-15 minutes or until golden brown.

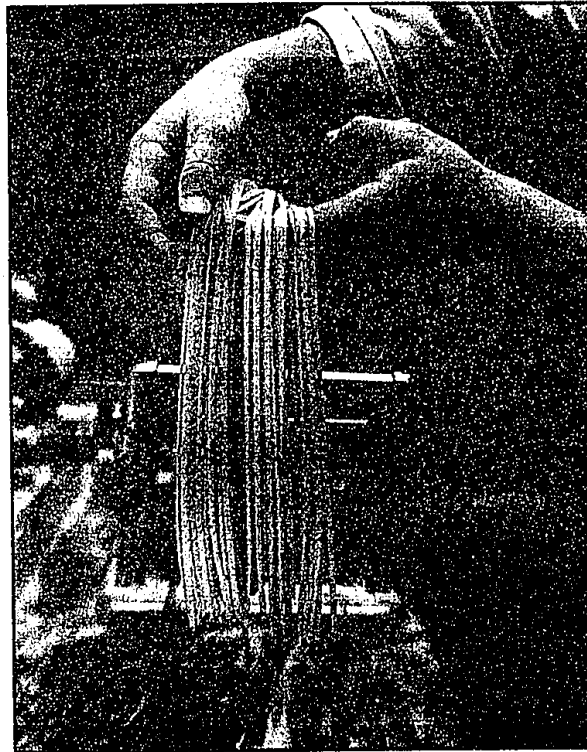
Add the garlic and the herbs and cook for 1 minute. Blend in the tomato paste, tomatoes and sauce. Bring to a lively bubble and keep it uncovered, stirring frequently for 10 minutes. Taste for seasoning and stir in sugar, salt and pepper as needed. Toss with fresh cooked pasta or use as a tomato base for lasagna. Makes about 6 cups of sauce.

Recipe from: "The Splendid Table" by Lynne Rossetto Kasper (Morrow, 1993)

LOOKING AHEAD

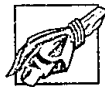
What to watch for in Taste next week:

- The wines of Gaigal are famed worldwide.
- Get ready for Passover.



STAFF PHOTOS BY JOHN STORAGLAND

Sansonetti makes pasta to order



Attention to detail, and pride in their work. This is what makes local pasta makers like Joe Sansonetti special. "I make everything to order," he said. "That's my only me."

BY BRIAN LYBAGHT
STAFF WRITER

Joe Sansonetti produces some 600 pounds of pasta products a week in the kitchen of his burgeoning Birmingham business. He does this almost entirely by hand.

"I make everything to order. There's only me," said Sansonetti.

Sansonetti's Gourmet Food Products is a husband and wife operation. While Joe oversees the kitchen, Kathy Sansonetti handles marketing and product distribution. She sells everything he makes and then some.

Once, he worked 26 hours straight, then almost collapsed from exhaustion. Now, the couple is planning to hire other pasta makers.

The demand for their pasta is nearly exceeding their ability to supply it. Their products are popular in local restaurants, delicatessens and specialty food stores.

Sansonetti's product line includes lasagna, ravioli, gnocchi, pasta shells and tortelli. Long pastas come in 13 flavors, from spinach to whole wheat to lemon dill. Stuffed pastas are filled with meat or cheese. They even make,

by special request, a rainbow pasta stuffed with seafood.

In addition, they produce a Jamaican "Jerk-Style" sauce, and are testing pesto-basil vinaigrette and golden Caesar salad dressings.

The ravioli and lasagna are sold in packets at specialty stores with sauces in boil-proof bags. A serving for two is \$6-\$7.

"We're targeting people who are active and don't have a lot of time to cook but like good food," Kathy Sansonetti said.

Their pasta products are served in several area restaurants, including Joe's Bar and Grill in Southfield, Joe's Chase in Novi, Maria's in West Bloomfield, and MacKinnon's in Northville.

You can buy them at Chimento's Italian Market in Livonia; Quarion, Fischer's, Shopping

Boe PASTA, 2B

PASTA



Pasta makers: Joe and Kathy Sansonetti of Sansonetti's Gourmet Food Products focus on quality. Joe oversees the kitchen, and Kathy handles marketing and product distribution. Rainbow Linguini is one of the company's specialties.

Mama Mucci's Pasta Company expands

BY BRIAN LYBAGHT
STAFF WRITER

Mama Mucci's Pasta Company recently moved to a building in Canton three times the size of its former quarters in Plymouth.

Now, to make use of all that space, the company is expanding its line of specialty pasta and sauces that are available in local stores. Providing fresh, frozen and dry pastas to restaurants and commercial kitchens is Mama Mucci's main business.

The family-owned company, now in its seventh year, will offer a new line of imported and lower-priced dry pastas and frozen pastas. Mama Mucci's first new sauce will be a jarred tomato-basil sauce, which company vice president Frank Mucci hopes will be on shelves this spring.

"We're planning to bring out several different ones," said Mucci. "The first will be in May, and then we'll try to bring another out every four to six months. That will give us a lot of time to get it right, to do a lot of in-store and other promotions."

Frank's brother, Vincent is president of the 14-employee company. His mother, Margherita, is the company's namesake, inspiration and quality control specialist.

"The owner is almost every day and keeps

Boe MUCCI, 2B



BILL BRENNAN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Family-owned company. Company namesake Margherita Mucci, and her sons Vince and Frank. The company is expanding its line of specialty pasta and sauces that are available in local stores.